x: Robinson, Donald

13 November 1953

x: Laski, Victor

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR:

Victor Laski, who wrote "Seeds of Treason," is the editor of the AMERICAN LEGION READER, which has just been published and will shortly be put on public sale. It is a compilation of the best stories that have appeared in the American Legion Magazine. "The Men Who Spy For America," the CIA story, is by Donald Robinson, who did the Irving Brown story for the READER'S DIGEST.

Ed McGinnis, the public relations director of the American Legion, told me that he has a copy of the READER to present to President Eisenhower upon his return from Canada, and around that time the public sale will be opened.

Recommend no letter be sent to Mr. Laski thanking him for this proof since the book is already in print.

STANLEY J. GROGAN

Enclosure

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11 on 13 Caledonia to 26 picas—closed compo

Or if it is autumn there are the rare fringed gentian, the goldenrod and the purple aster. What measureless content in the amber-colored stream, murmuring on forever! The glory and the dream are there, and perhaps they are what I mean.

Salt-water fishing is strenuous. It is entirely different, yet possesses that same charm, magnified incalculably. It is more primitive than fresh-water fishing because it has to do with the sea—the mother of all creation.

I have no salt in my blood. My ancestors were hunters, pioneers, and one of them was an Indian. I loved the woods and the streams beyond all else. As a boy I would sit for hours beside a waterfall and I have caught myself many a time screaming up at the torrent. And yet despite the fact that I was a landlubber I succumbed the sea I became, after many agonizing years of development, a salt-water angler for the big game of the sea.

As sport it is vastly superior to hunting tigers in Burma or Siberia. It possesses infinitely more danger than most people suspect. To stalk a huge broadbill swordfish is as exciting and thrilling as elephant hunting, and the chances of success are a hundred to one against you. The incredible patience, the incredible endurance needed, not to mention skill and strength, are the outstanding features in this sport fishing for the great tigers of the ocean.

Tarpon of the Everglades, the savalo of Mexican waters, the sailfish of the Gulf Stream, are game fish the Atlantic angler can look forward to mastering after he has served his apprenticeship on striped bass, channel bass, kingfish, barracuda and amberjack.

For the Pacific angler who can roam afar there is an amazing and marvelous sport in store. But to experience it in its breath-taking fullness he must indeed have the time and the means to venture to far waters. For the commercial interests, the net-boats and the canners have almost ruined the fishing from Puget Sound to Cape San Lucas.

Beyond these waters there yet await the ambitious angler a variety of great game fish—the giant sailfish of the Mexican coast, the striped marlin and golden dorado of the South Seas, the black marlin and the magnificent leaping mako of New Zealand, the white shark of the Great Barrier Reef and the unknown species of the Indian Ocean. And the king of them all, old Ziphias Gladius, the broadsworded swashbuckler of the Seven Seas.

The range between fresh-water and salt-water angling is infinitely various. The beautiful and wonderful fact is that any fisherman can find his place, however little and inexpensive, and by his own unaided effort, by his spirit and joy, enter into the hierarchy of this noble calling and from it renew his eternal youth, his love of nature, his sense of the divine mystery in all things, his faith in man, and his belief in God.

XIII

ESPIONAGE AND INTELLIGENCE

DONALD ROBINSON

THE MEN WHO SPY FOR AMERICA

MARCH, 1949

Not many people have what it takes to be a secret agent in Uncle Sam's world-wide intelligence network.

NOBODY KNOWS who they are. Nothing is more carefully concealed than their activities. Yet at this very moment they are risking their lives to defend the United States.

They are the secret agents of the Central Intelligence Agency, the United States' world-wide intelligence network. Matching wits with the undercover forces of Russia, they are operating in every country on earth, collecting the military, economic and political information which America must have if it is to prevent Pearl Harbor No. 2.

They are making lifetime careers in secret intelligence. They have chosen this field even though it means dodging bullets and knives, even though it offers little in the way of glory or monetary reward. Not one of them gets more than $9,900 a year.

Why have they picked it?

Love of their country is one reason.

The other reason was best stated by one of the agents himself. Back in this country, he was quizzed by a friend as to why he worked long hours, chancing torture and death, knowing full well that his Government would have to disown him if he got into difficulty, when he could be making much more money in another occupation.

"You're a damned fool to be risking your neck," the friend said. "Why do you do it?"

"Intelligence work gets in your blood," the agent replied.

That is said to be a motivating factor with most of the men and women who spy for America.

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11 on 13 Caledonia to 26 picas—closed compo

To prevent any "enemy" nation from penetrating the Central Intelligence Agency—that is, to keep another country from planting spies inside CIA itself—the organization has hitherto maintained a complete veil of secrecy around the selection of its agents. It has declined even to make public the qualification it seeks in them.

However, it can now be disclosed that CIA requires all its agents to have "a standard, well-rounded education," including a knowledge of economics, political science, military history, social science, mathematics, history and some engineering. In addition, CIA generally demands that they have previously lived in the area in which they are going to work and that they speak its language fluently.

From a high Government official this writer has learned the personal characteristics CIA looks for in agents.

"The agent," this official says, "must have unbounded energy. He must have imagination and yet unquestioningly obey orders and guidance from headquarters. He must be able to understand and cope with matters on an international scale and yet be willing and able to go into endless detail and month after month of routine work. He must have nerve tempered with discretion. He must be willing to 'stick his neck out' once he has arrived at a conclusion. He must, above all, possess fearlessness.

"Each man must be of unquestioned integrity and yet be willing to lead a life of continual duplicity."

Professional spies and small-time agents for hire, this same official declares, may be usable for messenger boys and flatfoot work, but that is all. According to him, CIA much prefers top-flight men.

"They are the key to clandestine intelligence," he says.

The recruiting and training of CIA agents is no easy matter. "Enemy" nations have men spread all over America with no other assignment than to spot new CIA agents before they go abroad, and CIA knows it. Always, therefore, it must guard against disclosing the identity of its personnel. And, always it must be on guard against attempts by "enemy" spies to get into its organization. (CIA men remember all too well the two German spies who, during the war, got themselves sent to the Office of Strategic Services school in London where they received full details of OSS methods.)

Not long ago, CIA heard of a young engineer who was going into the Balkans on a business deal. The man had been there before, talked the language, was alert and aggressive. He seemed the perfect type. But CIA could not go up to him, say "You're hired," and ship him off.

First, it had to check his personal loyalty and freedom from foreign pressures. It had to do this so secretively that no one, not even he, suspected that the CIA was interested in his background.

In this case, the report came back, "Loyalty check o.k."

Next, CIA had to find out if the engineer was interested in the assignment. This was a still more ticklish job. As one CIA insider commented, "It was a beautifully delicate operation in which we could not tip our hand until we were sure of the man, and yet we had to feel certain that he knew what he was getting into."

An understanding was ultimately reached with the engineer, but then the troubles really started. He had to be trained in all aspects of his assignment. He had to be "wised up" on the internal situation in the country he was going to. He had to be given a condensed course in espionage—how to make contacts, how to track down data, when to buy and when not to buy information, and, of the utmost significance, how to communicate his findings to CIA without giving away his sources or himself. He had to learn how to use codes, how to operate a portable radio, how to set up a "post office"—a blind for the receipt and transmission of messages.

And to avoid compromising this new agent, never during his entire training period could he be seen in the company of any known CIA personnel. He was not even allowed to write or telephone CIA.

Eventually, this engineer got off to Europe. He even had to arrange his own passport, visas and transportation.

In this instance, CIA was lucky in that it had a ready cover. Usually, it has to rig a commercial deal or some other arrangement to justify an agent's presence in the area to which he is sent. Many go as students or just as tourists.

What sort of work have CIA men been doing in foreign countries? And how good has it been?

Although CIA has pulled a number of boners in its short span of existence, it can be stated that it has also achieved some splendid results. CIA officials are banned from talking, and headquarters on the top floor of the Federal Works Building in Washington, D. C., are barred to visitors, but this writer has been reliably informed that:

Because of CIA's work, Marshal Tito's break with the Kremlin came as no great surprise to Washington. CIA men in Yugoslavia had notified our Government that Tito was purging Stalinists from his party.

It was CIA which learned of the conversion of the Soviet's Sixth Air Force into a long-range striking force and of its location, along with the Red Sixth Army, in Siberia. CIA has also done wonders in determining the placement of new Russian armament industries east of the Urals.

Down in Bogota, Colombia, CIA men had warning far in advance of the riots that disrupted the Pan American Conference there in 1948. (However, some of their dispatches were badly evaluated, and others entangled in State Department red tape.)

CIA agents have picked up the most intimate details on the lives and activities (secret and otherwise) of virtually every prominent Communist behind "The Iron Curtain." In fact, some of these Reds probably would be astounded to see the CIA files on them. They are said to include reports on everything from the sincerity of these Reds' Marxism to their susceptibility to flattery, the brand of cognac they prefer and the fidelity of their girl friends.

CIA men have been doing even more than spy. Everywhere in the world they have also been giving active assistance to the democratic elements that are fighting the Red tide.

After the Red putsch in Czechoslovakia, a small group of these agents set up an underground railway and helped hundreds of Czechs to escape the Red terror. They defied the entire might of the Russian secret police—and won.

This is how the CIA agents did it:

Disguised as peasants, the Americans set up a clandestine "assembly area" in a Prague suburb. Here they met the refugees and briefed them for their flight. With the help of false identity papers, they then personally led the Czech democrats through road barriers, check points and literally hordes of Russian secret police on the way to the border. There they took them past the searchlights and machine guns of Red patrols into the U. S. Zone of Germany.

Not all of them made it. Some of the Americans and Czechs paid for their love of democracy with their lives. In one case reported to Washington, only three out of a party of six reached the U. S. Zone.

The CIA was able to rescue over 1,000 other Czech democrats. They have given the United States information of immense value.

In this connection, it can be revealed that death alone kept CIA from pulling off one of the biggest coups of modern times—the escape of the late Czech President Edouard Benes from the hands of his Red captors.

CIA agents penetrated right through the cordon placed around Benes, after his ouster from office, and asked him if he would like to flee to the United States.

Benes said yes.

All arrangements for his flight were completed when he was taken down with his fatal illness.

Although some CIA men have been "killed in action," it can be authoritatively stated that—to date—very few of CIA's secret agents have been unmasked. Some CIA men are reported to have been trapped in Finland and Hungary but most of the other Communist-authored "exposes" of "American spy rings" overseas are false, concocted by the Russians for propaganda purposes.

As an illustration of the lengths to which the Russians have gone in this direction, Washington cites the case of Lieutenant Robert Dreher, the former Assistant Naval Attaché in Moscow.

While on duty in the American Embassy in Moscow, in 1948, Dreher received a telephone call from a Russian customs official whom he had met when he had been stationed in the Soviet Black Sea port of Odessa.

The Russian told Dreher that he, too, was now stationed in Moscow and that he had some information he would like to give him. He asked Dreher to visit him. It was here, Washington feels, that thirty-two-year-old Dreher made his only mistake. He should have realized that so blatant an offer was obviously a frame-up, especially since it was made over an Embassy telephone which he and every Russian knew was tapped. However, the lieutenant was curious about the "information" and he made an appointment.

No sooner had Dreher entered the man's office in the Moscow Customs House when MVD agents burst in. Although Dreher had taken no papers whatsoever from the man, the Kremlin proclaimed to the world that the MVD had found documents on him "with completely secret military information."

Quite properly, the State Department commented:

"In good American lingo, it was a plant."

The CIA is, of course, the first permanent intelligence organization in U. S. history. Established on September 26, 1947 under the terms of the National Security Act, it has a dual function. It is charged with all undercover operations abroad and with coordinating the intelligence activities of the Army's G-2, the Air Force's A-2, the Navy's ONI and the State Department's Foreign Service. These other agencies, it should be pointed out, are only permitted now to collect information through "open channels." They can do no espionage. That is CIA's job.

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It was not easy setting up a brand new intelligence organization. There were no facilities, no contacts and practically no trained personnel to draw upon. Nor was this strange. Always before the U. S. had scorned peacetime espionage. With traditional American dislike for all things clandestine, it had continually shut its eyes to the need for learning what other nations, even potential enemies, were up to. Not until Pearl Harbor No. 1 did Americans begin to see the danger of playing blind man's buff in world affairs. And then it was too late!

Incidentally, it should be stressed that espionage is only a small portion of intelligence work. Actually, the greatest portion of it consists of painstaking research into openly available material. It encompasses endless digging into musty Government reports, technical journals, books, newspapers and magazines. One fact is gleaned here, another there, and in the end a huge store of data is collected. To this are added the reports of our diplomatic staff, the military, air and naval attachés and those of individual travelers. In that way a composite picture of what is going on across the seas can usually be developed. From this picture trained intelligence evaluators can generally determine what any nation is likely to do and how well it will be able to do it.

For its research and evaluation work, CIA depends largely on former college professors, economists and statisticians. Most of them, however, are far more than cloistered academicians. In fact, a study showed that 58 per cent of the personnel in CIA's key Evaluation Branch have had military service. It also demonstrated that 98 per cent have had over one year of intelligence experience, 84 per cent over two years', and 70 per cent over three years'. More than 99 per cent are college graduates and among them they speak and read 29 separate languages. Some 95 per cent speak and read one foreign language, 71 per cent speak and read two languages, and 23 per cent speak and read three languages. Three out of every ten are women.

One of CIA's biggest jobs, by the way, is to prepare special studies for the President and the National Security Council.

"The White House wants a report on Russia's magnesium production," CIA will be asked.

The CIA staff will then collect every iota of available information on the subject, condense and analyze it and let the President have a concise survey.

Constantly, CIA is asked for its estimate as to the danger of an attack on the United States. In this respect, it has been the least alarmist of Washington agencies and so far, at least, events have proved it correct.

This is not to say that CIA is perfect. It has made and no doubt will continue to make blunders. However, the White House and the Pentagon both feel that it is doing as good—and even better—a job as one can expect from so young an intelligence organization. Already, they say, it can stand comparison with the British Secret Service and that doughty outfit is 539 years old.

THOMAS M. JOHNSON

BEFORE THE ARMISTICE—

AND BEHIND IT

NOVEMBER, 1938

The fledgling U.S. Army Secret Service learned fast during the First World War, playing a big part in forcing the German surrender.

"I've SEARCHED all your baggage myself," said the head of the British Secret Service, casually. "Also I've read every letter you've received or written. And really, my dear fellow, you're quite all right. Ah—soda?"

The American leaped from his chair.

"Why, dammit!" he exclaimed, with a rich Scandinavian accent, "the United States Government sends me across the ocean to Copenhagen to work with you, and for a month I try to do it. But to my face you high-hat me, and behind my back you spy on me, search my baggage . . ."

"But my *dear* fellow," expostulated the Englishman, "this game we're in is spying! And one searches first, and trusts afterward. But now, afterward means tomorrow, when we start working together. Then you'll understand. Ah—soda?"

Colonel Tryggve A. Siqueland of Chicago understood the secrecy next day when he had his first lesson in "this game we're in"—and found it astounding. For there in neutral Denmark the Allied secret services were not merely gathering information of what went on in bordering Germany. While on the front the visible armies of the Allies attacked her, on Germany's flanks the invisible armies of G-2 were conducting a great sapping and mining operation. They were boring beneath the frontier, into the very foundations of the Central Powers, helping to lay there the deadliest explosive charge of all—Revolution.

In that delicate work the American Secret Service joined until in late October and early November 1918, the charge exploded and blew away the last obstacle to the Armistice.

But the smoke-screen of secrecy was so dense that it has not yet fully settled. Even Hitler, who, as he strangled the feeble German Republic, called it a bastard with foreign blood in its veins, did not explain just what he meant. There is a hint in the admission of Colonel Walther Nicholai, the wartime Secret Service chief, that Germany "felt the efforts of the Allied secret services to bring about revolution," especially after the U. S. entered the war.

In April, 1917, our un-ballyhooed Secret Service organization numbered two and a half: two officers and a part-time clerk. In November, 1918, in Europe alone it numbered some 50,000, of whom the élite were remarkable persons: cosmopolites, linguists, college professors, private detectives, newspapermen—pegs for even the oddest-shaped holes. A special school trained men for posts in every neutral country bordering Germany, in one of which one branch of the service alone listed thirty-five sources of information and ten teams or groups of secret agents working